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SOME SUGGESTIONS REGARDING THE ORGANIZATION OF A DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY IN AN URBAN UNIVERSITY

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The suggestions that I have to offer on this subject have grown out of a persistent personal conviction, together with a practical experience of a little more than three years. With a substantial special endowment at my disposal it has been my privilege during these years to undertake to create a creditable and effective department of sociology in Western Reserve University in the city of Cleveland. It has been my task, originally suggested by the gentleman who endowed this new department in the university as a means of showing his interest in his native city and also a task cordially accepted by me as one worthy of accomplishment, to organize a department of sociology which should be all that such a department may be, at the present time, in an institution which seeks to serve in every possible way its constituency in a growing, cosmopolitan, typically American city. Clearly there is in this an assumption that university work in sociology may bear a more or less definite relation to the problems of the modern city and to the social and civic endeavor of its public-spirited citizens. My particular problem has been, therefore, to correlate courses in sociology, which shall meet the scientific and disciplinary requirements of the modern university, with the practical social work of which there is so much that is of a high order in our cities and for which there is so great need.

After a little investigation, I became convinced that this phase of the problem of departmental organization had nowhere in this country been faced squarely. On the one hand, I found universities giving instruction in sociology but giving little or no detailed consideration to the practical or applied aspects of the

subject. On the other hand, I found schools of philanthropy offering preparation for definite lines of social work but giving little or no consideration to the subject of sociology. Under these conditions it seemed that a new department of sociology to be established on an independent basis might well undertake to break new ground, and I have not hesitated to try experiments provided they seemed promising in their results.

The most striking innovation is perhaps the organization of a department of sociology with a course in practical sociology as the introductory course to precede the more advanced and specialized courses and without at first any course whatsoever in general or theoretical sociology. The notion that course 1 in the department should be a study of the principles of sociology, dealing, as such a course must, to a greater or less degree with abstractions and broad generalizations, was abandoned entirely. Work in the department was made to begin with the junior year in college and, in accordance with the organization of work in the other departments of the university, each course was made a three-hour course for a half-year. It was deemed advisable, however, to arrange for the work in practical sociology to continue through the junior year.

Accordingly, a course, entitled Practical Sociology, was planned for the first half of the junior year, covering mainly the following topics: structure and growth of cities, grouping of the population in cities, consequences of change from rural to urban life, housing conditions and the housing problem in modern cities, building codes and tenement-house legislation, sanitary inspection and public sanitation, water supply, sewerage system, street cleaning, garbage disposal, etc., work of boards of health, regulation of dangerous trades, smoke abatement, milk supply, social treatment of tuberculosis, public baths, physical training and medical inspection in the schools, work of the Visiting Nurse Associations, care of the sick and injured in hospitals, convalescent homes and dispensaries, social aspects of the work of the public schools, neighborhood centers, industrial or trade schools, libraries, public-lecture courses, museums, public responsibility for recreation, saloons, amusement places, play-

grounds and athletic fields, parks, bathing beaches, etc., work of institutional churches, Christian Associations, social settlements, etc., city planning, civic improvement. For the second half of the junior year a course was planned to cover another important phase of the general subject of practical sociology, that of charities and correction. The plan of this course may be described in outline as follows: causes and extent of pauperism, history of poor relief, principles of poor relief, modern methods and agencies of poor relief, the care of neglected and destitute children, the care of the defective classes, giving especial attention to the extent of the public responsibility for each and the principles and methods of treatment, crime and the treatment of criminals, history of penalties, modern methods and principles of dealing with crime, the care of juvenile offenders.

Throughout the year the study of these topics is made concrete and definite by constant reference to the local situation in the city of Cleveland. This is facilitated by requiring every member of the class to make certain expeditions, each of which is preceded by a special lecture that is given from the point of view of the social worker in the city. For this part of the work it has been my good fortune to secure a man who for several years was actively engaged in settlement work in the city and who is now the secretary of the Department of Charities and Correction of Cleveland. In this way a definite correlation is secured between the work of the classroom and the practical social work in the city. The students are furnished with a classified bibliography referring to books that are placed on a reserved shelf for their use and written reports are required periodically.

The number of students electing these courses has increased rapidly, so rapidly, in fact, that to meet the increasing demands that were being made upon the department it was necessary to secure an additional instructor this year. The plan and scope of the work has received the heartiest commendation not only from the authorities of the university but also from the citizens of Cleveland. Last year the course in practical sociology was repeated off the campus at an afternoon hour as a public course in sociology, open to all persons either actively engaged in social,

philanthropic, and civic work or particularly interested in modern city problems. The registration, attendance and sustained interest in this public course indicated clearly that it was regarded as an important and valuable course of study.

One of the courses following this introductory work in the department is a course on philanthropy. No doubt the subject of philanthropy has received comparatively little consideration thus far in the curricula of the universities because of the commonly accepted notion that philanthropy rests on sentiment and emotion largely and has no clearly defined scientific basis. As a matter of fact, it was to avoid giving the impression that I was undertaking merely to teach students how to give away their money or how to obtain money by persuasion rather than by earning it or stealing it, that I followed the example of Professor Henderson of Chicago and described the course, not merely as a study of philanthropy, but as a study of philanthropy in its historical development. In this course, conducted as a seminar with a group of selected students, an attempt has been made to do some original work—in particular, to find out what basis, if any, philanthropy really has. If the conclusions that have been reached are of interest, I shall be glad to have your opinions and your criticisms.

The first task in such an investigation is, of course, to differentiate philanthropy from charity and to discover what the conditions were which gave rise to philanthropy as distinguished from charity. The evidence available seems to indicate that philanthropy may be defined, broadly, as the effort to ameliorate the living and working conditions of the weaker classes under the modern industrial organization of society and that philanthropy has its basis in the fundamental changes in the social organization which have followed the introduction of the factory system of production and have been involved in the so-called industrial revolution.

In primitive societies, in ancient Greece, in the Roman civilization, in feudalism, there appears to be nothing within the range of this investigation which may not accurately be classified as charity; it would require a stretch of the imagination to

apply the term philanthropy. But with those far-reaching changes inaugurated during the last quarter of the eighteenth century and the earlier part of the nineteenth century—those changes that have made men think, as they never thought before, about their relations one to another and their mutual responsibilities, the beginnings of philanthropy may be discerned. Up to that time men habitually accepted existing conditions of life and of work as a matter of course, objecting only, upon occasion, to unendurable oppression or to tyrannical forms of government. Since that time men have not hesitated to question the justice or the desirability of existing conditions, whenever it has appeared that a considerable number or class of people was suffering serious hardship; nor have they doubted the possibility of securing, in one way or another, a betterment of conditions.

A brief summarization of these great economic and social changes from this point of view will perhaps make the thought more clear.

1. The adoption of the factory system of production has in fact profoundly changed the relations which men bear one to another. Men no longer live and work independently. It is no longer possible for them to do so. One man produces one thing, another something else, another something else and so on, and then there is an exchange of products. Each seeks to get all of his wants satisfied, not through his own efforts directly, but by producing something, or taking part in the production of something, which through a constantly widening market may be exchanged for the other things that he wants. The principle of division of labor now runs right through the social organization. It is utilized not only inside the factory and within the large mercantile establishments; the entire organization of modern society is built up on this principle. At the beginning of the twentieth century there is in reality a greater interdependence of men, one upon another, than ever existed before.

2. Great numbers of men—and of women, too—have been brought together in factories and in cities as wage-earners.

They do not own the tools or machines with which they work; they do not own the raw material; they do not own the finished product; generally they do not own a habitation or dwelling-place. They work for wages. They have no direct economic interest in their work other than that of getting wages. They have absolutely nothing to say about how the product shall be made or where and for what price it shall be sold. They are in a position of dependence. They are dependent upon finding and keeping employment, or else becoming employers themselves. It has become increasingly difficult, however, for the employee to change his position to that of the employer. The factory system favors large scale production and comparatively few can secure the amount of capital that is required for large scale production. There is, therefore, a rather sharp division between employer and employee. We have two classes: one made up of employers and capitalists, those who occupy, as a class, the stronger economic position; the other made up of the wage-earners, who occupy, as a class, the weaker economic position.

3. Along with the growth and extension of the factory system there has been an enormous production of wealth. Economy in cost of transportation, economy in methods of production, economy in methods of marketing the finished products, as well as the economy resulting from the application of the principle of division of labor, have combined to secure the accumulation of wealth during the nineteenth century at a rate far more rapid than the world has ever known before. Those who are in the stronger economic position, however, have control of the whole process of production and distribution, and they also have control of the net income. They cannot of course fix the net income arbitrarily but the entire management of the business is in their hands and they get the net income without telling the employees how much it is. In other words, there is no direct guaranty that the wage worker will get his full share under the factory system. There is nothing inherent in the system that guarantees that. There is nothing inherent in the system that guarantees steady employment.

4. During the progress of the industrial revolution there have been frequent crises in the business world—"hard times," they are called for want of a better term. They are apparently something new in human experience. Up to very recent times famines were not uncommon, but famines have now been abolished wherever the industrial revolution has become an accomplished fact. If there is a crop failure in one country, or in one section of a country, a food supply can be obtained from some neighboring region. Food supplies can be transported quickly over vast areas. The telegraph and cable lines, the railways and steamships constitute a rapid means of communication and of transportation. We have abolished famines, but we have apparently got something else nearly as pernicious. The factories suddenly close down, not because anyone wishes them to, but because the market will not apparently take their products. Numbers of men are thrown out of employment and since they do not get their wages they cannot purchase the things they want, although everything that they want is on the market. The merchants and traders have the goods to sell but they cannot sell them. There is no lack of material goods. Everything that anyone wants is at hand. Still numbers of people suffer extreme hardship for a considerable period, through no fault of their own, and the charitable resources of our cities are taxed to the utmost.

5. Even during the periods of expansion of business, however, when production is going forward with a rush and opportunities for employment are abundant, the incidence of the risks of modern industry so far as human life is concerned seems to fall almost entirely upon the wage-earners, those who are relatively in the weaker position. Accidents and injuries in the course of duty, it is assumed, are to be borne by the employee unless he can prove at law that his employer was negligent. If a man accepts employment in a certain position he accepts the ordinary risks of that position. In case a family is deprived of its chief support by the permanent injury or the death of the wage-earner who is the head of the family, the employer pays as a business proposition the smallest

amount that he can under the circumstances and hires another man. There is no one who assumes any real responsibility for the future welfare of that family except possibly some well organized modern charitable agency with ample resources, which the community may be fortunate enough to possess. Let me refer you for facts and a more explicit statement of the case to the volume of "The Pittsburgh Survey" entitled *Work-Accidents and the Law* and to other similar studies of recent date. Who shall say that the demand on the part of industrial workers for "justice, not charity" is a groundless plea? Who shall say that the sociologist may not legitimately concern himself with the incidence of the risks of modern industry?

6. To a very considerable extent the domestic or household arts have been absorbed by the factory system of production. The factories have been gradually taking over the manufacture of clothing and of wearing apparel of all kinds, the manufacture of house furnishings of all kinds and even the preparation of the food supply to a very marked degree, as is well illustrated by the quantities of canned goods that are now on the market. This absorption of the domestic industries by the factories has had some very important consequences. In so far as the conditions under which the work is done may affect the quality and the wholesomeness of the goods put on the market, the consumer can be safeguarded only by some social or public regulation of factory conditions. The individual consumer cannot acquaint himself with the conditions surrounding the manufacture and distribution of what he purchases. He must purchase, as an individual, merely in faith and in hope. It is also true that relatively more of the women are to be classified under the head of wage-earners. Instead of working at home spinning, weaving, making house furnishings, and preparing meals for a family, many women are now working in factories, stores, and offices for wages. The home and the life of the family, at least the traditional family life, is necessarily affected when this happens. Children may also be employed advantageously in modern industry, unless in the interest of the children themselves and of future generations child labor is

prohibited by a wise and farsighted social policy. It should be further noted that the homes of the wealthier people, those from which the women do not go out to work for wages, are also affected by the factory absorption of the domestic industries. The woman of the house becomes a manager chiefly rather than a provider. The household work has been reduced to a minimum and servants are employed to do this minimum amount. This gives to the woman of the house and to her daughters a very considerable leisure which has come to be occupied largely by "social duties," i.e., engagements of various kinds outside the home which may be grouped under such heads as educational, charitable, philanthropic, clubs, teas, receptions, parties. In any event, the constant extension of the factory system of production vitally affects the living conditions, as well as the working conditions, for an ever-increasing proportion of the population.

7. The industrial revolution has promoted the growth of the largest cities that the world has ever known. The rapid growth of great cities is one of the distinctive features of the nineteenth century. Since the modern cities are primarily factory centers and centers of exchange (trade and commerce), great numbers of people are required to carry on this work and they must necessarily live close together. As yet, however, these masses of population, these varied groups differing widely as to their traditions and their religious affiliations, crowded together in cities, have not learned apparently the first principles of living in cities. There is constant violation of every rule for the physical, mental, and moral welfare of the human race. Ignorantly and blindly, and, I may add, half-heartedly, these struggling millions are reaching out for some means by which they can secure an improvement of urban conditions. It is but gradually coming to be recognized that the distribution of health is a question quite as important in our cities as the distribution of wealth. Facilities for wholesome recreation, also, are just beginning to receive a proper recognition of their importance under urban conditions.

It is in these fundamental changes in the social organiza-

tion, thus briefly indicated in this summary, that philanthropy has its basis. The necessary social readjustments furnish ample opportunity for philanthropy legitimately to make its influence felt and there is the utmost need for its exercise. There is need not only for wise private philanthropy but for carefully considered public philanthropy as well. There is need for the so-called welfare work, for relief departments, for pension-funds; but also for factory legislation, for labor legislation, and for general social legislation designed to secure an improvement of conditions. There is urgent need for a better distribution of the inevitable risks of modern industry, especially in so far as they affect human life.

The course on philanthropy includes, among others, these topics: the development of factory legislation, modern social legislation, welfare work, railway relief departments, employers' pension and relief funds, mutual benefit associations, benefit features of trade unions, employers' liability, workingmen's compensation, industrial or workingmen's insurance, old-age pensions, agencies for encouraging thrift, postal savings banks, etc., provident loan associations, various forms of private philanthropy, endowments, experimental agencies and organizations for the betterment of conditions. These are subjects to which the sociologist may properly give his attention. They need to be studied and discussed as social questions, not merely as economic and governmental questions of interest only to economists and political scientists. My experience indicates, also, that students of sociology are glad to have an opportunity to study them. And may I add without being misunderstood, that these topics are quite as important for a college curriculum in sociology as the question whether the origin of the human race is to be found in the middle of the Indian Ocean or somewhere in the arctic regions; quite as important as the attempt to determine precisely what a certain set of stone implements indicates as to the mental caliber of some primitive race; quite as important as the consideration of the question whether society has an objective or only a subjective existence.

Another course offered in the department is a study of col-

onization from the sociological point of view and it is designed to make direct use of the student's knowledge of history. Colonization is looked upon as a series of social experiments and the course is described as a laboratory course in sociology. It is scarcely advisable for the sociologist to attempt to conduct experiments in a laboratory within four walls and it is quite impossible to get together a group of people and transport them wherever you wish them to go, or subject them to whatever conditions you wish, merely for the purpose of sociological experimentation. But in the history of colonization we find that numbers of people have gone out from the older civilizations to the uttermost parts of the earth and have with more or less difficulty founded new societies. The records of their successes and failures are available and their experience furnishes valuable information concerning emigration and immigration, acclimatization, the relation of the struggle for existence to the development of social institutions, frontier society, the growth of new societies, contact of races, the native question. It is apparent that here is a fertile field awaiting the sociologist's exploitation; it as yet has been scarcely more than touched from this new point of view. For the present, Professor Keller's book on *Colonization* supplies an excellent textbook for such a course. It may be added that this course is one that is of practical interest to American students now that this country has come to possess colonies of her own and is of primary importance for a study of colonial administration preparatory to entering the consular service.

A course on American society, for the second half-year, has been planned to follow the course on colonization. In this course American social conditions are studied not as a succession of more or less unrelated social problems but as phenomena characteristic of a colonial society which has reached an advanced stage of development. For example, the problem of immigration is viewed as a social question common to all prosperous colonial societies. In short, American society is treated simply as one of the colonial societies studied in the preceding course which is selected for further consideration because it happens

to be the society in which we live and the future of which is therefore of special importance to us.

A course on social evolution has been made course 1 in the department but it is the plan to permit students to begin work in the department with either this course or the course on practical sociology, or even with the course on colonization if they wish. The department insists merely upon a logical sequence of courses. It is recommended to students who desire to specialize in sociology that they elect both the courses on social evolution and practical sociology at the beginning of the junior year and then follow the indicated sequence of courses. Other courses in the department are: Principles of Sociology—which is designed for the second half-year to follow the course on social evolution and to utilize the concrete descriptive material provided by that course—courses on the child and the community, the family, history of sociology, and four additional courses of a specialized and practical nature, penology, charity organization and administration, the social function of the church, special problems in sociology.

With this curriculum as a basis it is planned in the future to make further extensions in the direction of giving definite and effective preparation for specific lines of practical social work. The demand for trained and capable social workers and for efficient public administrators in our great industrial centers is an increasing one and the supply at the present time of men and women who are properly equipped for important positions in this field is considerably below the demand. If proper instruction and training were offered there can scarcely be any doubt of a ready response from those who are seeking to enter this field of work. By adding to the faculty experts and specialists in various fields of social work, the department may then be placed in a position wisely to undertake to provide professional training for directors of organized charities, Christian Associations, institutional churches, settlement and civic work, for executive secretaries of educational and philanthropic societies, welfare managers of factories and stores, superintendents of public recreation, expert sanitarians, probation officers, super-

intendents of child-helping agencies and of reformatories and other agencies of correction. The instruction that may thus be provided will also be of interest and profit to clergymen and church workers, lawyers, journalists, business men, officers of the state and municipal public service, school teachers, librarians, labor leaders, factory and health inspectors, members of boards of managers and committees of philanthropic institutions, friendly visitors and volunteer workers in any field of social service where a knowledge of existing conditions and of modern methods of work is essential to efficiency. The same professional needs which have established schools of engineering with practice shops and field work, the same conditions and tendencies which have established schools of medicine with laboratories and hospitals furnishing practical experience and opportunity for investigation, the same requirements which have established schools of theology and law schools, are now demanding, in connection with the rapid growth of cities, a modern scientific training for social work. The responsibility for providing preparation and training of this character rests very largely upon the departments of sociology in the urban universities.